United Nations A/72/340 (Part I)

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 August 2017
English
Original: Arabic/English/French/
Spanish

Seventy-second session
Items 96 and 103 of the provisional agenda*

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Observations	3
III.	Replies received from Governments	5
	Brunei Darussalam	5
	Canada	6
	China	6
	Colombia	7
	Cuba	8
	Ecuador	9
	El Salvador	9
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	10
	Israel	12
	Jordan	13
	Lebanon	13
	Madagascar	14
	Mexico	15

* A/72/150.

17-14143 (E) 050917

Please recycle

Paraguay 15
Syrian Arab Republic 16
Ukraine 18
IV. Reply received from the European Union 19

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 71/29 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 46/30 and taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the Report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990 (A/45/435) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventy-second session a report on implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 23 February 2017, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs sent a note verbale to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraphs 10 and 11 of General Assembly resolution 71/29 and seeking their views on the matter. This was followed by a second note verbale dated 12 June 2017. Additional replies received after 31 July 2017 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs[1] in the language of submission only.

3. Replies, which have been received from the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Paraguay, Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine, are reproduced in section III of the present report. A reply from the European Union has been received and is reproduced in section IV, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/276.

II. Observations

4. Since the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was unable to reach an agreement on a substantive final document, the Secretary-General, along with the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, have continued to explore ways to bring the States of the Middle East back together to seek a common way forward toward the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The States of the region have also actively sought new initiatives and proposals aimed at reviving progress toward the establishment of the zone.

5. At the sixtieth session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in September 2016, States took steps to maintain a positive political atmosphere in support of the concept of convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons mass destruction. While the Arab States that are members of the International Atomic Energy Agency pursued a previous request for the inclusion of an agenda item entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities", those same States opted not to re-introduce a resolution under this item for the first time since 2013. Israel

[1] www.un.org/disarmament/.

welcomed the decision as a positive step and expressed hope that it would mark a path forward toward future meaningful regional dialogue.

6. At the meetings of the First Committee during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, in October 2016, States continued to demonstrate support for the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons mass destruction. The Arab States ultimately decided to retain a reference to the convening of the conference in the annual resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, the most recent of which is resolution 71/83. The Russian Federation delivered a joint statement on behalf of the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East in which those States, inter alia, welcomed the decision of the League of Arab States to form a high-level expert committee to study the issue of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons mass destruction. They expressed their conviction that the convening of an initial conference on the establishment of the zone remained an achievable and worthwhile goal. Furthermore, they affirmed the necessity of direct and inclusive dialogue involving the States of the region towards that end, and they encouraged those States to study the factors that prevented the convening of the conference as mandated by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

7. In November 2016, the League of Arab States established the Panel of Wise Men on Disarmament Issues and Non-Proliferation, pursuant to the decision of 11 March 2016 of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the League of Arab States. The mandate of the Panel was to further study the development of a strategy by the League of Arab States for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the context of the position of Arab States on nuclear non-proliferation. The Panel, which was chaired by Turki bin Faisal Al Saud of Saudi Arabia and had a total of 10 members, submitted its report prior to the first session of the preparatory committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

8. The first session of the 2020 Review Conference, which was held in Vienna from 2 to 12 May 2017, was the first opportunity since the 2015 Review Conference for the States parties to consider how to move forward with the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Most States parties continued to support the concept of convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, despite the lapse of the mandate agreed to at the 2010 Review Conference. The Russian Federation introduced a new proposal for a preparatory process aimed at reaching agreement on organizational modalities for the conference on the zone. Arab States expressed various views on the way forward, with 12 Arab States issuing a joint working paper renewing their support for the convening of a conference and Egypt issuing a working paper in which it called upon the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution to propose a new mechanism to achieve its implementation.

9. Recalling that the 1995 resolution on Middle East calls for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations have, since the previous report of the Secretary-General, continued their joint work towards the full destruction of the declared chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. This work contributes to, inter alia, the realization of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The continued engagement and a resumption of consultations between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Organisation for the Prohibition of

Chemical Weapons is necessary to resolve all outstanding issues related to Syria's declaration under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Reports of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic are deeply disturbing, in particular the confirmation by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-Finding Mission in Syria of the use of chemical weapons in Umm Hawsh, in September 2016, and Khan Shaykhun, in April 2017. In this connection, the renewal of the mandate, through Security Council resolution 2319 (2016), of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is welcomed.

10. The convening of a conference, to be attended by all the States of the region, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, still has support. It is regrettable that since the previous report of the Secretary-General on this matter, the views of the States of the region have not come closer together on a mutually agreeable path that leads towards the establishment of the zone. The Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs remain ready to support efforts to promote and sustain the inclusive regional dialogue necessary to achieve the establishment of the zone.

11. The creation of stable security conditions and an eventual Middle East peace settlement would contribute to the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. In that connection, all concerned parties inside and outside the region should seek to create such conditions. Furthermore, the United Nations continues to be ready to provide any assistance in this regard. In this context, the continued lack of prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the growing impediments to the realization of the two-State solution is deeply concerning. The two-State solution is the only realistic way to achieve an end to the conflict, an end to the occupation that began in 1967, resolution of all final status issues — including Jerusalem, borders, refugees and security — and the establishment of a sovereign, independent, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace with a secure State of Israel, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council, previous agreements, the Madrid Principles and the Quartet road map. I also reaffirm my strong commitment to reaching a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and stress the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative in this regard.

III. Replies received from Governments

Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]
[29 June 2017]

Brunei Darussalam is a keen proponent of regional and global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts of arms classified as weapons of mass destruction, aligning with international and regional (specifically the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) commitments on such issues. A foreign policy that is strongly supportive of international norms, peace and security, ensuring the absence of nuclear weapons in volatile regions in the Middle East, would be conducive to Brunei Darussalam's international aims.

Brunei Darussalam maintains friendly relations with many Middle Eastern nations, and has defence ties with countries such as Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Brunei Darussalam also actively deploys members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces to participate in United Nations Peacekeeping

Operations in Lebanon. In the light of such relations, Brunei Darussalam remains committed to supporting agreements and treaties to effectively reduce the threat of nuclear weapons and has always sought to encourage transparency, confidence-building and multilateral efforts on related issues.

Canada

[Original: English]
[27 July 2017]

At the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, Canada supported resolution 71/29, in which the Assembly called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Canada is committed to advancing the outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including a conference on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It encourages all relevant stakeholders to arrive at modalities for a conference and to ensure a successful conference to be attended by all States in the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them. Any zone free of weapons of mass destruction should be negotiated by States in the region for States in the region, with support from other actors as requested.

Canada continues to call for the universal and full adherence and compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by States in the Middle East, and for all remaining States not party to the Treaty to join as non-nuclear-weapon States. As a confidence-building measure in advance of this ultimate goal, Canada also calls on these same States to separate civilian and military fuel cycles and to place all civilian nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. These statements are in conformity with both the policies and actions of Canada, which include Canada's voting record on the resolutions at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

Canada recognizes the growing interest in nuclear energy among States parties in the Middle East and welcomes the announcements made by a number of such States concerning new initiatives in this field. In welcoming these initiatives, we note that all nuclear power programs should be accompanied by the strongest commitments to nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear security and nuclear safety.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Canada co-sponsored resolution 71/86 at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, as well as resolution 2310 (2016) of the Security Council, adopted in December 2016, and continues to encourage all states in the region, particularly those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to ratify the Treaty as a confidence- and security-building measure.

China

[Original: English]
[31 July 2017]

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/29, the Chinese Government would like to share its views, set out below, on the measures facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

The nuclear-weapon-free in the Middle East, once established, would help prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, ease tension in the Middle East and enhance peace and security in the region and the world. While promoting

reconciliation and cooperation among the Middle East countries and facilitating the Middle East peace process, the international community should attach great importance and support efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

All countries should earnestly implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the relevant provisions of the Final Documents of the Review Conferences in 2000 and in 2010, respectively.

States concerned in the Middle East should sign and ratify the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Israel should accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State as soon as possible and fulfil its obligations sincerely, and the international community should continue to encourage concerned States to sign and ratify the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreements.

According to the action plan of the eight Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction should have been held in 2012. It is regrettable that the meeting has not yet been held, which led to the fruitlessness of the ninth Review Conference. The meeting cannot be delayed indefinitely.

China calls upon the early convening of the international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, ensuring the universal participation of all States in the region. During the new review process, all parties concerned should fully demonstrate their political will and adopt flexible and practical measures to break the deadlock.

China is ready to actively participate in the relevant process and provide all necessary support to contribute to the early establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[28 April 2017]

Colombia has called for general and complete disarmament, advocated the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a contribution to world peace and security, and supported initiatives in the area of non-proliferation.

Colombia attaches importance to the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist, in accordance with the principles and guidelines laid down by the Disarmament Commission (A/54/42).

As has traditionally been the case, Colombia supported the latest resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, submitted at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

Within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Colombia voted in favour of the resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East, which is traditionally presented at the Agency's General Conference.

Colombia supports the prompt convening of a conference to address the issue of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East, in accordance with the decision

adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[22 May 2017]

Cuba does not possess and has no intention of possessing weapons of mass destruction and firmly supports their total and complete prohibition and elimination.

The Cuban State has maintained a consistent position against terrorism, as reflected in its ratification of 18 international conventions on terrorism, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is explicitly mentioned in General Assembly resolution 71/38.

In order to ensure that no acts of terrorism in any of its forms or manifestations are committed in Cuba, legislative, administrative and institutional measures, including provisions to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture, have been adopted.

Act No. 93 (the Counter-Terrorism Act), adopted in December 2001 and amended by Decree-Law No. 316 of 2013, and Decree-Law No. 317 of 2013 on the prevention and detection of transactions related to money-laundering, the financing of terrorism, arms proliferation and illicit capital flows both strengthen the measures we have taken to prevent our country from serving as a channel for the acquisition of such arms or their components by terrorists.

Efforts to counter terrorism must be universal and must involve multilateral agreement through genuinely effective international cooperation to prevent and combat all acts of terrorism on the basis of strict respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The selective and discriminatory initiatives being promoted by groups of countries outside the multilateral framework in no way contribute to, but rather weaken, the role of the United Nations in all aspects of the struggle against weapons of mass destruction.

The General Assembly and existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction have a central role in issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. No measure adopted by the Security Council can undermine that role. That being so, Cuba attaches great importance to the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, an instrument that should guide the global struggle against this scourge.

The only effective way to prevent the acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction, including by terrorists, is through the prohibition and total elimination of such weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. As long as weapons of mass destruction exist, there is a latent threat to international peace and security.

The destruction of all chemical weapons arsenals in the shortest time possible would represent the greatest contribution that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons could make to international efforts to ensure that these weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of terrorists.

The adoption of a legally binding protocol that strengthens the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction in a comprehensive and balanced way, and includes elements of international cooperation, assistance and

verification, is essential in order to exclude the possibility of any use of bacteriological agents and toxins as weapons.

The ongoing negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination, constitute a significant step towards nuclear disarmament.

Cuba has never allowed, nor will it allow, terrorist acts of any kind against any State to be carried out, planned or financed on its territory. It reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of all terrorist acts, methods and practices, in all their forms and manifestations, by whomever, against whomsoever and wherever they are committed, whatever the motives, including State terrorism.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[31 July 2017]

In accordance with its commitment to peace and in line with article 415 of its Constitution, Ecuador calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes and rejects any kind of threat or use of force to resolve them. It also condemns the development of weapons of mass destruction. In that context, it was one of the five Latin American countries that signed the 1963 declaration that led to the negotiation of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which established the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world.

Ecuador has welcomed the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world (Africa, South Pacific, South-East Asia, Central Asia and Mongolia) because it believes that, as more territories are declared free of nuclear weapons, there will be enhanced awareness of the illegality of the use of these weapons, which will make a tangible contribution to building a safer world. As a result, it regrets the failure to convene the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which was agreed upon at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Ecuador is convinced that measures to advance the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must be based on dialogue and the political will of the countries involved, and therefore reiterates its call to initiate, as soon as possible, concrete negotiations leading to the establishment of such a zone.

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[24 May 2017]

With regard to the fulfilment of obligations to the United Nations under the resolutions relating to nuclear weapons, the arsenals of the Armed Forces of El Salvador do not contain the type of weapon referred to in those resolutions. However, as a Member State, our country supports the initiatives and efforts of the United Nations to promote environmental protection measures in nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements and other measures that contribute to non-proliferation and the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

[Original: English]
[31 July 2017]

The idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was proposed for the very first time by Iran in 1974. This initiative indicates the long-standing commitment of Iran to the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world, including in particular through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in this volatile region.

The annual and consensual adoption by the General Assembly, since 1980, of resolutions calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East signifies the particular importance of the realization of this noble idea for the international community of States. Reaffirmation by the General Assembly, in the final document of its tenth special session, of the importance of establishing such a zone, also indicates that this initiative enjoys long-standing strong global support.

Moreover, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have highlighted the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East as a matter of priority in the successive Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty. The adoption by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of a separate resolution on the Middle East, as an essential and integral part of the package for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, signifies the vital importance of the realization of this goal for the parties.

In addition, the 2000 Review Conference, while noting that all countries in the region of the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, were parties to the Treaty, reaffirmed "the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the placement of all of its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards", in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East and paving the way for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In an important step to pursue the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the 2010 Review Conference unanimously decided to convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a t zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

This decision was supported overwhelmingly by the international community and significant efforts were exerted for the successful start of the conference in Helsinki in late 2012. The Islamic Republic of Iran, including through several rounds of consultations with the facilitator, expressed its views regarding the issues relating to the organization of the conference, and declared, well in advance, its readiness to participate therein.

However, unfortunately, the planned Helsinki conference was not convened owing solely to the refusal of the Israeli regime to attend the conference. The worst thing was that the proposal "to entrust the United Nations Secretary-General to convene the Conference no later than 1 March 2016", which had been made at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and had been supported by almost all the States parties, was rejected by the United States of America, which led to the failure of the Review Conference. Immediately after the Review Conference, the Israeli Prime Minister thanked the United States officials for taking this position. This clearly indicates not

only the hypocritical policies of the United States with regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but also proves that the United States easily disregards the views of almost all parties to the Treaty solely to appease the Israeli regime, which is the only non-party to this treaty in the Middle East. This kind of reward will indeed further motivate the Israeli regime, as the only outsider, to obstinately retain the status quo, to continue to threaten its neighbours and the region and to defy the repeated calls by the international community to comply with international principles and norms.

Notwithstanding the persistent global call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, owing to the intransigent policy of the Israeli regime, including its refusal to become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards, no progress has been achieved thus far towards the establishment of such a zone.

It is crystal clear that the aggressive and expansionist policies of the Israeli regime (examples of which are its attacks, in recent years, on Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Arab Republic and countries outside the region) and its large arsenal of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as its non-adherence to international law, are the sources of serious threats posed to regional and international peace and security. Indeed, the Israeli regime is the only obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

This view is shared by the overwhelming majority of Member States. It is worth mentioning in this regard that, at the sixteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Tehran from 26 to 31 August 2012, the participants "expressed great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals." The participants "were of the view that stability cannot be achieved in a region where massive imbalances in military capabilities are maintained particularly through the possession of nuclear weapons, which allow one party to threaten its neighbours, and the region." This position was also reaffirmed at the seventeenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 17 and 18 September 2016).

Against this backdrop, to promote peace and security in the Middle East and to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone therein, the international community, in particular the depositaries of the Treaty, which are also the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and the European Union, should exert utmost pressure on the Israeli regime to compel it to accede, without any precondition or further delay, to all international legally binding instruments banning weapons of mass destruction, in particular the Treaty, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and to place all its nuclear facilities and activities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran, by ratifying all international treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, namely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction; and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and fully implementing their provisions, has demonstrated its strong resolve in support of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Such legal obligations are also enforced by strong policies at the highest level. One example in this regard is the address by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomenei, at the Sixteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, in which he stated:

> International peace and security are among the critical issues of today's world and the elimination of catastrophic weapons of mass destruction is an urgent necessity and a universal demand ... The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the use of nuclear, chemical and similar weapons as a great and unforgivable sin. We proposed the idea of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and we are committed to it.

In addition, the Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no efforts in supporting meaningful steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in appropriate international forums, including the 2015 Review Conference and the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference (Vienna, 2 to 12 May 2017). The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its strong support for the establishment of this zone by taking the necessary practical measures to that end.

Israel

[Original: English]
[30 May 2017]

The Middle East is an area that has been fraught for many years with wars, conflicts, hostilities and human suffering. In recent times, it has grown ever more unstable and volatile, with the disintegration of national territories, the rise in areas partially or fully under the control of terrorist organizations, the rampant proliferation and diversion of conventional weapons to State and non-State actors, including sophisticated weapons and, most significantly, by the prevalent use of chemical weapons in contravention to international treaties and Security Council resolutions, as well as the pursuit of nuclear weapons capabilities by States in the region.

The use of chemical weapons, which has been carried out by a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction before and after its accession, has motivated terror organizations in the region to follow suit and develop, as well as use, chemical weapons. The absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons has been eroded and challenged time and time again, so far with impunity.

Against this sombre backdrop, it is clear why Israel continues to emphasize the need for a direct and sustained dialogue between all regional States to address the broad range of security threats and challenges. Such a regional dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, must emanate exclusively from the region and address the concerns of all regional States on an equal footing and in an inclusive manner. Direct contact, combined with trust and confidence-building, are essential prerequisites for any meaningful dialogue and any attempt to create a new security paradigm in the region.

It should be recalled that between October 2013 and June 2014, Israel agreed to participate in consultations regarding the regional security challenges in the Middle East. Five rounds of multilateral consultations were held in Switzerland between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. Despite Israel's serious attitude, the Arab side refused to engage in a constructive manner, and ultimately withdrew from these consultations, which led to their termination.

While some actors in the region claim that a new and comprehensive security architecture can be established in the Middle East without direct engagement with Israel, without recognition of Israel's right to exist within safe and secure borders, and without reducing regional tensions and the building of the necessary trust and confidence among regional States, this position is untenable and will fail the pursuit of a safe, stable and secure Middle East.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[26 April 2017]

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has adopted a clear policy, and has a firm conviction that strict measures should be taken to eliminate prohibited weapons and focus on promoting sustainable development and increasing opportunities for peace.

Jordan reaffirms its declared support for all international and regional efforts towards multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation.

Jordan believes that the realization of universal peace and stability in the world in general and in the Middle East in particular requires political will and a clear commitment on the part of all the States concerned.

The chaos, instability and lack of trust in the Middle East require all of us to cooperate in earnest and take disarmament measures that are inclusive and transparent.

Jordan believes that disarmament is not an issue that can be addressed by any one State. There must be regional and international efforts to promote the idea of multilateralism. Jordan has ratified all the conventions and treaties on weapons of mass destruction, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Jordan supports and is actively seeking the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The ratification by Jordan of the instruments listed in the preceding paragraph is a sign of its commitment to international instruments that strengthen security, peace and stability around the world.

Jordan is firmly convinced that the elimination of the nuclear threat from the Middle East will lead to a reduction of tensions, a building of trust, and an end to the arms race.

Jordan does not manufacture weapons of mass destruction and does not allow the transit of such weapons through its territory. However, it underscores that it has right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and possess legal conventional weapons to defend its territory and sovereignty.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[4 April 2017

- Lebanon does not possess weapons of mass destruction, and regards the threat or use of such weapons as illegal;

- Lebanon complies with United Nations resolutions, particularly as regards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and cooperates in efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. It expresses its deep concern, however, about Israel's failure to adhere to international law. Israel maintains a nuclear arsenal that constitutes a threat to all the countries of the region, and consequently to international peace and security;
- Lebanon supports and welcomes all initiatives to achieve nuclear disarmament, particularly in the Middle East, and reaffirms the role of the United Nations in that regard;
- Lebanon has introduced laws and regulations that allow for the monitoring of the export, transit and cross-border transport of any type of weapon of mass destruction or related components;
- Lebanon does not provide assistance of any kind to any group seeking to acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, provide or use nuclear or other weapons;
- Lebanon supports Arab conferences and initiatives aimed at eliminating the causes of tension in the Middle East, in particular by ridding the region of weapons of mass destruction. It participates actively in all meetings of the technical committee responsible for preparing a draft treaty on ridding the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, nuclear weapons. Lebanon stresses the danger that Israel's weapons of mass destruction represent for international peace and Arab national security.

Madagascar

[Original: French]
[20 June 2017]

The United Nations has observed that:

- The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, supported by a number of countries, is one of the positive measures in the nuclear disarmament process.
- Regional disarmament measures have contributed to global disarmament. Support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is essential to ensure international security in the field of nuclear weapons.

The then Organization of African Unity had supported the adoption of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, in accordance with its 1964 Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. The latter contributes to ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, promoting general and complete disarmament, and strengthening regional and international peace and security.

As a State member of the African Union, Madagascar is able to appreciate the efforts of the international community to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The details and technical aspects of the establishment of such a zone should be worked out by committees from that zone.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[15 March 2017]

Mexico was a key driver behind the establishment of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated territory and this year proudly celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Mexico supports the establishment of new such zones as a measure that has proved its effectiveness in fostering nuclear non-proliferation. This, of course, is subject to explicit agreements consistent with international law between the parties concerned.

In the opinion of Mexico, nuclear-weapon-free zones have contributed to the process of nuclear non-proliferation, as long as participating States undertake not to develop, acquire or use nuclear weapons and to prevent the deployment in their respective territories of such weapons belonging to other States. Ultimately, for Mexico, militarily denuclearized zones are not an end in themselves but an intermediate step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mexico considers that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a key component of the commitments behind the 1995 agreement on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the agreements reached at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, since it would help to defuse tensions and create a climate of peace and security in that region, thus contributing to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons there.

Mexico regrets the postponement of the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and considers that the cancellation of the conference has a negative impact on the non-proliferation regime. Mexico also considers that the failure to convene the conference has affected the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, to the detriment of trust between the Parties and of their commitments. Mexico hopes that the start of the Treaty review cycle in May 2017 will impart fresh momentum to the conference, and respectfully and energetically urges the international community to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

Mexico, both individually and together with other countries, will continue to support efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in the First Committee of the General Assembly and within the IAEA framework, in addition to reiterating its offer to share its experience and lessons learned during the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Paraguay

[Original: Spanish]
[31 July 2017]

Paraguay supports the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and has consistently advocated the adoption of a resolution on the subject. Paraguay firmly believes that the establishment of such a zone will contribute to the peace process in that region.

Therefore, Paraguay encourages the international community to continue its efforts and to agree on specific decisions and practical measures towards achieving that goal through the implementation of the 1995 resolution, an essential part of the

commitments related to the indefinite extension in 1995 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and of the Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Therefore, the 2020 Review Conference will have the challenge of taking concrete action on this issue.

On 14 February 2017, the States Parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) met to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area and has served as a political, legal and institutional reference for the establishment of other, similar zones around the world.

On that occasion, and through a ministerial declaration supported by Paraguay, the States members of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean expressed regret at the failure to honour the agreement to convene an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They reiterated that the convening of that conference was an important and integral part of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. Therefore, the States members of the Agency urged that the conference should be held as soon as possible, with the active participation of all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States. They also expressed regret that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had concluded without the adoption of a final document owing to the lack of consensus on the issue.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]
[26 May 2017]

The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world is an important step towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation that would help consolidate peace and security regionally and internationally, and preserve the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic welcomes United Nations efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East through General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic was one of the first States in the Middle East to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in 1968, and firmly believes that the possession of nuclear weapons by any State or acquisition of those weapons by non-State actors or terrorist groups threatens international peace and security. Syria has affirmed, in all international forums, its continuing commitment to its international undertakings under the Treaty, which it considers the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, the key to achieving full disarmament and an international reference that accords the States parties the inalienable right to acquire nuclear technology for use in various nuclear energy applications.

In April 2003, in keeping with its commitment to make the Middle East a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, the Syrian

Arab Republic, as a member of the Security Council, submitted an initiative to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, certain influential States on the Security Council took positions that blocked that initiative. In December 2003, the Syrian Arab Republic put that initiative forward again, with a Security Council draft resolution in blue. Syria continues to await action by the Security Council to adopt that resolution.

The accession by the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction demonstrates its commitment to the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, and gives the lie to pretexts used by Israel about the dangers of the possession by certain Arab States of other types of weapons in order to evade the issue of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the only way to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and rein in the risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is for Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State and place all its nuclear activities under an IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that it is gravely concerned by the obstacles placed by Israel in the way of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons. Israel continues to refuse to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State and to place all its nuclear activities under the supervision of IAEA, in contravention of all relevant internationally recognized resolutions of the Security Council, in particular Security Council resolution 487 (1981), and resolutions of the General Assembly, IAEA and the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic affirms the need to uphold the statement in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that recognized that the 1995 Middle East resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved. That Document also affirmed that that resolution is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic recalls that the resolution to extend the Treaty indefinitely, which was adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, would not have been possible had it not been for the bargain reached at that time whereby the nuclear-weapon States committed to a review of the concerns of many States parties in the Middle East region, and particularly the need to put pressure on Israel to accede to the Treaty, place all its installations under comprehensive safeguards unconditionally and without further delay, and abandon all its military nuclear capabilities, which are not subject to international supervision, in order to pave the way for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Syrian Arab Republic regrets the failure in 2012 to convene an international conference as envisioned by the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That 2012 conference was supposed to have been attended by all the States in the Middle East with a view to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Syrian Arab Republic likewise rejects all the pretexts put forward at that time by the United States, in its capacity as a depositary State for the Treaty and one of the sponsors of

the 2012 conference, to explain the failure to convene the that conference. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses yet again that the Security Council has a responsibility to put pressure on Israel with a view to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, particularly since the depositary States for the Treaty are permanent members of the Security Council, and in order to compel Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, abandon all its nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery, and place all its nuclear activities under an IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the obligation of nuclear-weapon States under article I of the Treaty to undertake not to transfer to Israel any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or any direct or indirect control of weapons or such devices, and not to assist, encourage or induce Israel in any way whatsoever to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or gain control over such weapons or explosive devices.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East should in no way be linked to the peace process in the region. The Syrian Arab Republic also reiterates that any identification of the countries in the Middle East region for this purpose in no way constitutes a definition of the region.

The Syrian Arab Republic again reiterates its willingness to cooperate with the Secretary-General for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[31 May 2017]

Ukraine is a member of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons since 1994 as a non-nuclear state. During 23 years of Treaty membership, Ukraine has been fulfilling its obligations in accordance with the provisions of this international legal instrument. Furthermore, Ukraine keeps undertaking and efficiently implementing additional obligations in the framework of nuclear security summits. In particular, in addition to the elimination of all nuclear weapons Ukraine refused to use highly enriched uranium and removed all of its stocks from its territory.

The establishment of the internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine underlines the importance of the establishment of zones free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, where they do not exist. Ukraine reconfirmed its position on multiple occasions, including on a high political level at the 2015 Treaty Review Conference. A consensual approach is the best way to make progress towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the outcome of the 2010 Treaty Review Conference. We regret that the conference on the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has not been held yet.

IV. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]
[31 May 2017]

The European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as set out in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. This was reconfirmed in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration in which the European Union and its member States, together with all the countries from the Middle East and Northern African region, committed themselves to the pursuit of "a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems". The European Union considers the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East valid until its goals and objectives are achieved, in line with the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons action plan.

While the European Union regrets that the 2012 Helsinki Conference on the zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has not been convened, it nevertheless maintains the view that dialogue and building confidence among stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree on arrangements for a meaningful conference, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them, as decided by the 2010 Review Conference.

The European Union has continuously expressed its readiness to assist the process leading to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In order to facilitate dialogue among States of the region and bring the process forward, the European Union organized two seminars in respectively 2011 and in 2012. Likewise, prior to the 2015 Review Conference, the European Union convened a capacity-building workshop in Brussels in June 2014 for Middle Eastern Diplomats in support of the Helsinki Conference. We positively note that the Co-Convenors and the European Union Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament both met, separately, with the Arab League Panel of Wise Men on Disarmament Issues and Non-Proliferation in January 2017 to explore how a fresh start can be made to the process, and that they will continue to engage with all States in the region.

The European Union continues to call on all States in the region, which have not yet done so, to accede to, and abide by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Additional Protocol and, as applicable, a modified Small Quantities Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Also subscription to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missiles Proliferation could contribute to regional confidence building, which is necessary for progress towards a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.